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***Statement of Former Congressman Bob Barr***  
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**Barr Calls for No Vote in Both Houses on Sham Patriot Act Reauthorization Conference Report**

**ATLANTA (November 18, 2005)** – “Patriots to Restore Checks and Balances is today calling for a no vote in both the House and the Senate on the Patriot Act reauthorization conference report tentatively agreed upon by conferees. The tentative agreement does not fix the most intrusive and unwarranted parts of the Patriot Act, and is entirely and totally unacceptable.

“Until recently we had every indication that Congress was moving towards adopting the modest but important checks on government power contained in the Senate reauthorization bill. This reflected a commonsense compromise that was widely praised as a step in the right direction by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, representatives of the business community, and – most importantly – the American public. Now, at the eleventh hour and behind closed doors, the Administration has decided to play partisan hardball by practicing exclusionary politics, and conferees are bowing to the pressure. This is an inappropriate and dangerous game, as nothing less than the fundamental freedoms of the American people are at stake.

“What we have is a conference report that gives the appearance of compromise without actually doing anything meaningful to safeguard ordinary Americans’ Fourth Amendment right to privacy. Some of these cosmetic changes simply make explicit what the law already requires and other changes in fact represent a setback for civil liberties. What is most disturbing is that, under this conference report, the government would *still* not be required to provide *any* evidence connecting an individual to a suspected foreign terrorist before going on a fishing expedition through that individual’s sensitive personal records.

“This is not a hypothetical problem. We have documented proof that the FBI issues tens of thousands of national security letters (NSLs) on ordinary Americans each year, and that many of the rules governing secret surveillance have been violated since the Patriot Act. Moreover, many of the Patriot Act’s extraordinary powers have been employed by the government in cases that have nothing to do with terrorism investigations. This was not the intent of Congress when the law was passed, and to allow such extraordinary powers to become ordinary shows blatant disregard for our nation’s system of checks and balances.

“This reauthorization bill reflects a capitulation to the pressure of a few against the will of the many. I encourage the full Congress to stand up for the will of the American people and to preserve the integrity of our Constitution by voting NO on this conference report.

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